



JOHN GARAMENDI  
Insurance Commissioner

May 17, 2004

The Honorable Mark Leno  
Member, California State Assembly  
State Capitol, Room 3146  
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Assembly Bill 1967

Dear Assemblymember Leno:

Fifty years ago today, in deciding the landmark anti-discrimination case known as *Brown v. Board of Education*, Chief Justice Earl Warren wrote the following words:

*"We conclude that, in the field of public education, the doctrine of "separate but equal" has no place. Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal."*

At the time these words were written, our nation was engaged in a most profound and contentious struggle. Chief Justice Warren's words were truly remarkable when they were written fifty years ago, and they remain so today.

The notion of separate but equal is anathema to the very heart and soul of our nation, contradicting the most basic premise of our nation's creation, that all people are created equal.

Today, our nation is again in turmoil as it confronts the issue of same-gender marriage.

California has led the way in recognizing the rights and responsibilities of same-gender couples. Through "Domestic Partnership," these couples no longer need to fear being barred from visiting an ill partner who is hospitalized, or losing all possessions in the event of a partner's death. Many of the most important State benefits of marriage are, or will soon, be available to these couples.

However, on this day when we celebrate the anniversary of *Brown v. Board of Education*, we must again speak out against the doctrine of separate but equal. Domestic Partnership, while a great improvement in the lives of many, is not equality. It is, at best, separate but equal.

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Therefore, in the spirit of Justice Warren's words, "*the doctrine of "separate but equal" has no place,*" I join you in supporting AB 1967.

Sincerely,



JOHN GARAMENDI  
Insurance Commissioner